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ELTON'S 29 DATE BASH!

PLANT: Why I am in exile

ROBERT PLANT has become the first rock superstar to hit out against the British tax system.

In an outspoken interview with the Melody Maker, Plant said this week: "You can't just sit down and write a song that you're prepared to put out, because you'll be taxed to the hilt."

"Why the hell should you put out something and come out of it with tuppence?"

Plant, with the rest of Led Zeppelin, is among the ever-growing community of British tax exiles allowed into their own country for only a limited number of days each year. Never before, however, has a rock star so strongly condemned the British tax laws.

Talking to the MM's Chris Charlesworth in New York, Plant claimed: "It aggravates me that people have worked for something for a long time and they've had to leave because of these tax laws."

"New York, grey as it may be, is full of some of the finest English talent, not just music but sports personalities and actors, and anybody who has a flair for something."

"We all want to go home but there's an outrageous state of affairs taking place in England, an outrageous mishandling of the country's affairs in general."

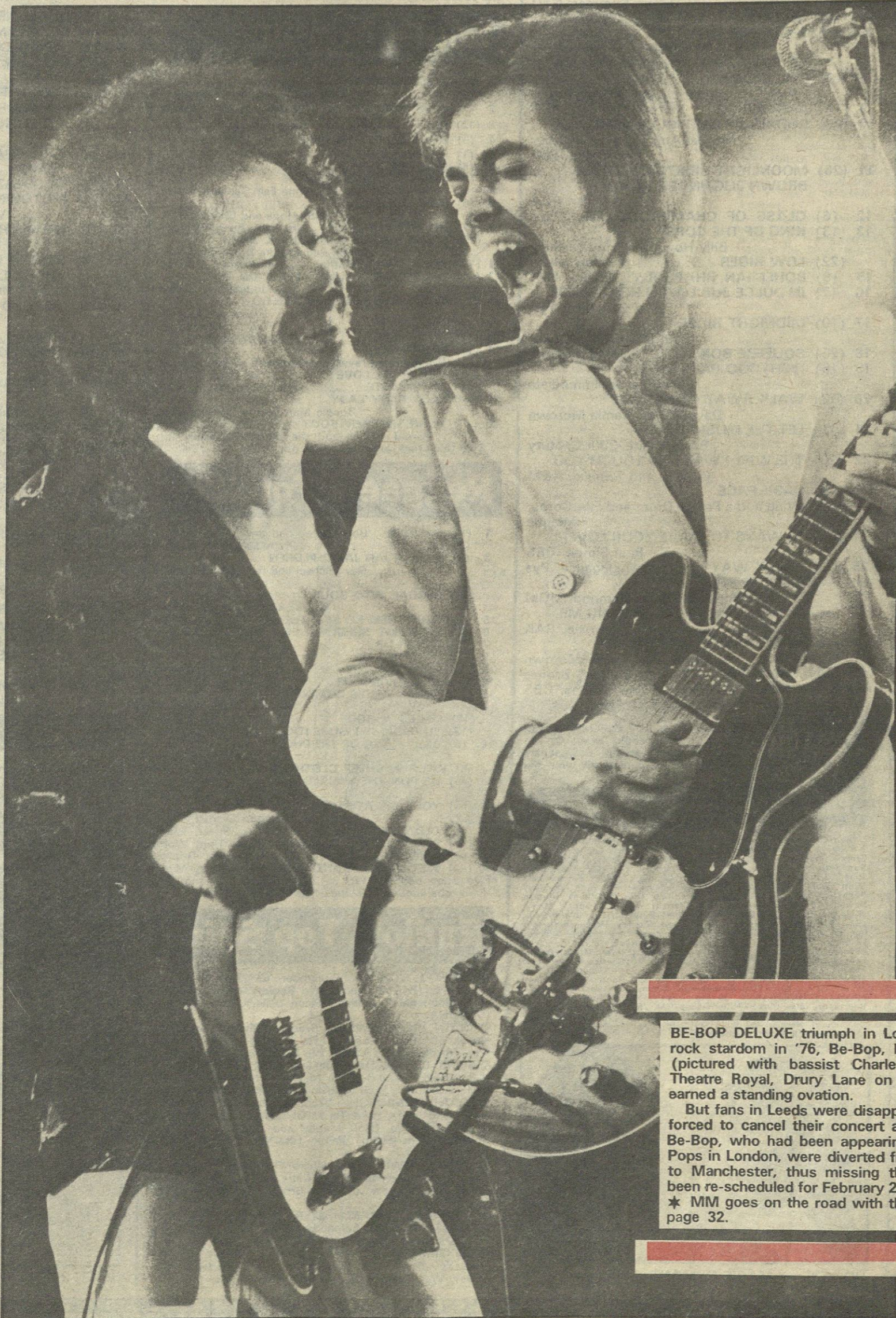
"It's a very pitiful situation when a lot of the more established musicians have to flee. You only have to go from here, and four skyscrapers down the street there's Mick Jagger. He'd echo the same thing."

"We're all holed up in little boxes here, looking over Central Park. It's very, very sad. Now, I can just imagine the letters to Mailbag saying 'f... the money and come home' but you have to live with reality."

"It's one thing to forget the money, but there's a moral aspect which is ludicrous. Rock and roll is a very lucrative form of making money easily, and just because the Government has loused up all the way round, they shouldn't just turn to music or any form of entertainment."

"If it wasn't for this tax, we'd be doing an English tour at least once a year for sure, but even when we did Earls Court we didn't come out with anything."

● Robert Plant in the Melody Maker interview — page 8.



ELTON JOHN's massive British tour this Spring promises to be the rock event of the year. No other artist of his stature has ever played so many concerts in this country.

A total of 29 shows have been scheduled, including two giant concerts at London's Earls Court, which holds 17,000 people. Proceeds from the tour go to charity. The Earls Court shows will benefit the Sports Aid Foundation and a further six charities will gain from the other concerts.

It will be the first time Elton and his band have played in Britain since their Wembley Stadium concert last June, and promoter Mel Bush anticipates that more than 160,000 people will see the tour. Besides all the major rock theatres, Elton will also be playing at Bailey's Club in Watford — he is a director of the local football club.

The full tour schedule is: LEEDS Grand (April 29, 30), MANCHESTER Belle Vue (May 1), PRESTON Guild Hall (2), LIVERPOOL Empire (3, 4), LEICESTER De Montfort Hall (5), STOKE-ON-TRENT Victoria Hall (6), WOLVERHAMPTON Civic Hall (7), CROYDON Fairfield Halls (9), LONDON Earls Court (11, 12), WATFORD Bailey's Club (14), BIRMINGHAM Odeon (16, 17), SHEFFIELD City Hall (18), NEWCASTLE City Hall (20), EDINBURGH Usher Hall (21), DUNDEE Caird Hall (22), GLASGOW Apollo (24, 25), COVENTRY New Theatre (27, 28), SOUTHAMPTON Gaumont (29), TAUNTON Odeon (30), BRISTOL Hippodrome (31, June 1), CARDIFF Capitol (3, 4).

BE-BOP DELUXE triumph in London! Tipped by many for rock stardom in '76, Be-Bop, led by guitarist Bill Nelson (pictured with bassist Charles Tumahai), stormed the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on Sunday with a set which earned a standing ovation.

But fans in Leeds were disappointed when the band were forced to cancel their concert at the university last week. Be-Bop, who had been appearing on BBC 1's Top Of The Pops in London, were diverted from fogbound Leeds airport to Manchester, thus missing the show. The concert has been re-scheduled for February 29.

★ MM goes on the road with the hottest band in the land: page 32.